

Before You Go

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Summary: Rapid fire, her mind replayed images from the past few minutes. Waking up curled in Fitz's bed. His lips against hers. His worried eyes. A girl calling her 'Mum.' A girl calling Fitz 'Daddy.' Shaking, she held up her hand. On her finger was a glistening diamond ring. /or/ She was a sixteen year old girl in a woman's body. And these people were acting like they knew her.

## 1. This Is How It Starts

**\*\*Hello, everyone! I'm back with a new story. Obvious, but hey, if I don't state it, who will?\*\***

**\*\*This one takes place after "Never Let Go," but I guess you don't have to read it to understand completely. You'll get more of the general plot as the story moves along. :)\*\***

**\*\*Enjoy! :D\*\***

**\* \* \***

><p>She awoke to the feeling of crisp sheets and softly chirping birds.<p>

It was something picturesque, almost. The way the sunlight slanted in dreamily through the windows, or the tiny pricks of dust in the air. The warm body pressed against hers, arms draped lovingly against her hip bones and the breath ruffling her hair -

Her eyes blew wide open as a cold finger of dread swept through her. This room wasn't her own. And this was most certainly not her bed.

The being pressed against her bare back stirred, pulling her tighter against him. Though she couldn't yet discern who it was spooning her,

the breathing was clearly male.

She stifled a groan of despair at his movement. Whoever this guy was, he was a cuddler.

Quickly, Jemma assessed her situation. She didn't seem to be in any danger. The body next to hers seemed more content on snuggling than harming. And he was obviously still asleep. If anything, her chances of running were best.

It took approximately 76 seconds of discomfort for her to snap. And yes, she did count, thank you very much.

Carefully, she began to slide down into the sheets. His grip slackened and for a fleeting second she let a bolt of excitement arc through her. Just a bit more and she was free.

But then his arm tightened and towed her up. She had but a second before his lips descended on hers.

Jemma let out a sharp squeak against his mouth. He jerked back instantly, as if he'd been shocked with a jolt of lightning.

"Jem, you alright?" He asked worriedly. "I didn't hurt you or . . ."

The rest of his sentence fell upon deaf ears. Because Jemma was staring at the face of her competition and rival - Leo Fitz.

His eyes were wide and blue. His usually boyish face was somehow older, stubbled cheeks and curls gone. And he was in her bed, shirtless.

Well, someone's bed.

"What . . ." She let out, breathing strangely erratic.

He reached for her face, as if to gently cup it, but she jerked back. A wave of hurt came over his face.

"Jemma, what's wrong?" Fitz's eyes searched hers. "Is it the babe?"

"What?!" She repeated again, voice raising in pitch. "What's wrong? What's wrong is that we're in a bed together! Me and . . . and you!" Her hands dug into her eyes as she rubbed her face. The lack of support of the sheets caused them to fall, leaving her in nothing but a flimsy top. She squeaked again, pulling it back up. "What did you do to me?!"

His face jolted between shocked and worried. "Wha' . . . What do you mean?"

"We are . . . We are in a bed together!" She all but spat at him. "You're shirtless and I . . . I'm . . ." Barely clothed. She reddened, deciding not to finish her thought.

"Jemma, hon, what's wrong?" Fitz asked again, taking her gently by the shoulders. The horrified look in his eyes almost hurt her.

Though she willed it not to, her lower lip began to quiver. Before she knew it, she'd begun sobbing. Fitz softly pulled her into his arms. She was too distraught and utterly confused to resist.

He gently rubbed her back, whispering reassurances in her hair. "It's just hormones, Jem. You're alright, I've gotcha."

A few moments later, she collected herself enough to pull away stiffly from him. "What do you mean by hormones?"

He visibly stiffened, narrowing his eyes slightly. "Jemma, this isn't funny."

She glared at him. "I'm not joking! What do you know about my body that I don't?"

"Jem . . ." he trailed off, a revelation dawning on his face. "What year is it?"

"2006. Really, Fitz. For a child prodigy I'd expect-" She stopped. His face had gone deathly pale. "What? What is it?"

"Oh, God," he jerked away from her and the bed, standing. He was in nothing but a pair of pajama pants. Hands running wildly through his hair, he started pacing. "They did it . . . They did it . . ."

"Who did what?" She demanded, tired of the way their conversation had gone this far. "I'm done talking in half sentences, Leopold!"

The door creaked open, and both parties froze in their actions to see a small head poke around the door frame.

It was a little girl with tousled caramel curls. Her eyes were striking blue. A little nightgown hung on her, though she was barefooted.

"Why are you fighting?" She mumbled, rubbing her eyes with one hand.

"Lizzie," Fitz began, rushing over to the door to scoop her up. Getting a good look at her, Jemma gauged she couldn't have been more than three years old.

"Who . . . Who is that?" Jemma asked, barely above a whisper. A sink hole was opening in her chest.

"I, ah . . . Let's all go get a cuppa, shall we?" Fitz dodged the question.

"Leo Fitz," Jemma all but slammed her foot down. She was riding on a wave of emotions, none very pleasant.

His mouth opened to reply, but 'Lizzie' jumped in first.

"Daddy, is Mum okay?" Her long eyelashes struggled to blink away the sleep.

Jemma staggered back out of the bed. "I . . . I don't understand." Her voice was coming out in quiet breaths. "You . . . You hate me."

And I'm sixteen, in uni . . ."

"Jemma -" Fitz began again, but she was already flying out the door.

The fact that she was only in a thin tank top and rather inappropriately short sleeping shorts didn't stop her from running down the hallway at full blast. And the hallway itself - it was a strange hodgepodge of bricks and concrete that she could hardly believe the warm room she just left was related to any of it. It all twisted together into a labyrinth of passages, and selected them at random.

Though she had never prided herself on athleticism, her muscles grew weary after only a few minutes of sprinting. Before she knew it, she was cramping and gasping for air from both her dash and revelations.

Hearing no one, she slumped down against the brick wall. It was eerily silent aside from her breathing.

Rapid fire, her mind replayed images from the past few minutes.

Waking up curled in Fitz's bed. His lips against hers. His worried eyes. A girl calling her 'Mum.' A girl calling Fitz 'Daddy.'

Shaking, she held up her hand. On her finger was a glistening diamond ring.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>So yes, the chapters are going to be shorter than usual because I'm trying out a different writing style. We'll see how it turns out :) But the good news about this is that I'm able to keep updating more regularly, so whoo hoo! XD<strong>

\*\*Please leave a review! It helps keep me going :)\*\*

## 2. And So It Goes

\*\*Wow, I'm overwhelmed from the response last chapter! I did not expect so many views / reviews / kudos / bookmarks! . . . That was awesome, thank you guys all so much :) 3\*\*

\*\*I'm also shocked no one caught any hints. Oh well, you'll understand this chapter XD \*\*

\*\*Kinda. \*\*

\*\*Enjoy!\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>Fitz stared as his wife rushed out and down the hallway. His shouts for her to come back were ill-fated as she bolted.<p>

Lizzie let out a small sniffle, and he looked down to catch her sad

eyes.

"Where's she going?" she whispered, small hands fisting in his shirt. "Why were you fighting?"

Fitz just cradled her curly head on his shoulder. "Mum's just confused right now, alright? We're going to be fine, baby girl,"

Lizzie sniffled and buried her cheeks further in the crook of his neck.

The three year old was a prodigy, much like her parents. She understood far more for her size than many of her peers. But nothing scared her more than fights between her small family.

And here, her mother had just forgotten her place in their world. A large piece of the puzzle had just fallen out.

Fitz clutched her closer to his chest as they began their search.

\* \* \*

><p>Jemma was panicking.<p>

She had a daughter. She was married. And somehow, she had married her worst enemy.

Oh, and the fact she was at least in her late twenties. Out of everything that should have shocked her, somehow that hit the hardest. At least a decade of her life was gone. She was sixteen in a woman's body.

On top of that, she was scared senseless and running in an unknown building from her enemy husband. Because apparently in this life the cosmos hates her.

She was jogging around another corner when she ran headfirst into a body. The collision sent them to the floor in an ungraceful heap.

Jemma skittered backward as soon as she'd caught her bearings, backing into a wall. The person she had knocked down " a brunette girl " just laughed as she stood up.

The girl brushed off her clothes " a strange tactical looking suit. Her eyes were dancing with amusement as she took in Jemma.

"Trying to escape them already, huh?" she grinned, offering a hand.

Jemma hesitated a split second before taking it. She plastered on a grin.

"You know how it is," she skirted with a small wave of her hand.

The brunette scoffed. "Not yet. But at the rate Lincoln's been pestering for a kid, it probably won't be too much longer,"

Jemma chuckled, trying to play the part as she suspected future-her

would. "Sounds like how Leo did,"

Her eyebrows scrunched in confusion. "You're trying for another?"

Jemma paled, wondering how deep she'd just dug her grave. "Oh, no . . . I just meant with um, Lizzie and all,"

This only served to confused the brunette more. "Wait, how long were you and Fitz together before the Monolith? Because you only ever said like three days . . ." her face suddenly lit up. "Ooh, I'm getting in on a juicy little FitzSimmons secret, aren't I?"

Jemma wanted to crawl in a hole and die. How well did future-her know this girl, anyway? Must be quite a bit to be digging into such a personal topic. And what the heck did she mean by 'monolith?'

She was saved by a scuffle of doors. They both turned to see Fitz dash in with Lizzie on his hip. Her little nose was pink and cheeks tear-tracked.

Jemma sucked in a breath. Fitz carefully set Lizzie down. The brunette cast glances between the two parties.

And then Lizzie was running at her. Jemma didn't have a chance to react before the girl was grabbing at her legs with an iron grip.

She wanted to run. To escape this nightmare she'd been thrown into. But looking down at this girl â€" her daughter â€" her legs refused to move. Instead, her fingers found their way into the girl's curls and she knelt. Lizzie captured her in a hug.

"You scared me," she cried. "Me and Daddy couldn't find you,"

Jemma cast her eyes up to Fitz. He was staring down at her with watery eyes. She looked back down, unable to handle the intensity of his gaze.

Her lips pressed a hesitant kiss to her forehead before finding her ear. "You need to go back to your Daddy,"

Lizzie gazed up at her with big blue orbs. Jemma bit her lip and tore her eyes away. Softly she stood, and, using the element of surprise, sprinted back the way she'd come.

Looking back on her actions, she had absolutely no logical explanation for why she did it. But at the moment it occurred, her emotions took over. This couldn't be - \_wasn't\_ - really her husband, her daughter, her life. This was some other person's gift.

"\_Jemma!\_" Fitz yelled after her.

And suddenly she wasn't in a dark hallway. She was in the sky, on an aircraft overlooking the ocean. Someone was banging on glass, screaming her name. But when she turned around to see who it was, she was suddenly back in the hallway. And the one screaming was Fitz.

He grabbed her and pulled her to his chest. One hand was running

through her hair while the other was on the small of her back. His arms were strong around her, and it was only then in the safety of him that she realized she was shaking like a leaf. Her eyes were blown wide and tears carved paths down her face in rivulets.

And then both hands cupped her face, his eyes wide and searching. She couldn't help but let out a small sob, completely overwhelmed. She felt removed from her body, stunned by the sudden hallucination.

"Skye!" Fitz was on the verge of a yell. "Get Liz back and grab Lincoln. I think she's going into shock,"

His yell startled her back out of her trance. Jemma jerked away again, struggling to run. She barely made it a few feet before his arms grabbed her again around the waist.

"Jemma, you need to listen to me!" he ground out, an edge of panic in his voice as they scuffled. "You're going to hurt yourself or-" he cut himself off.

"Or who?" she bit back harshly, squirming in his grasp to get free. "You? Because the last time I checked, you hated me! And I hate you, so let me go!"

He stiffened, and even in her panic, Jemma felt a prick of regret. In a glance of his face, she saw tears just beginning to leak over his cheeks.

"Jemma, I don't know what happened." he started, still struggling to get her to the ground. "but listen to me. I love you, yeah? It's not going to change. You're not going to hurt me. It's not me I'm worried about,"

She pulled hard to get free. "Then who is it, huh? Our so called daughter over there?"

Fitz gave one last twist of his body and suddenly they were both on the ground. Jemma gave up and let him push her into a sitting position against the wall. Again, his hands cupped her face.

"Jemma," his voice started to break. "you have to calm down. If not for me, then for our child, alright?"

"No," she shook her head, choking down a sob. Dread of his words trickled down her spine. "she's not ours. She can't be. I'm sixteen. I'm going into Uni. We're enemies. This is some weird twisted dream, and . . ."

Fitz let out a choked sound of anguish. "No, Jemma. That's not what I mean,"

"Then what do you mean?" she nearly screamed at him. "Stop playing around!"

"Jemma, you're pregnant."

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Alright, well, I'm off to take my PSATs :( Hoping I score as well as last time, cause otherwise I wasted like four hours of my life in a classroom. <strong>

\*\*That sounded weird if you're not a homeschooler . . . which I am, for those of you wondering XD\*\*

\*\*Anyway, maybe leave a review for when I get out of class? :)  
\*\*

\*\*Thanks so much for reading!\*\*

### 3. My Dreams Are Fading Now

\*\*Guess who's early? ;) Yup, I couldn't stay away. And considering I've gotten two more chapters written in three days (WHOO) I figured I'd update early. Also because my social life is severely lacking, but you didn't hear it from me O.o\*\*

\*\*As always, enjoy! :)\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>"Jemma, you're pregnant,"<p>

She stared at him. He was joking. He had to be joking. There was no possible way there was a fetus inside her.

But his eyes were so honest and she could read him like an open book. She was staring through the windows of his soul and he wasn't kidding. She was carrying his child. Their baby.

"No," she whispered. "No, there's no possible way,"

He gave her a strained grin. "You're a biochemist, Jem. You know how it works,"

She shook her head, tears beginning again as she brought her hands to her flat stomach. "But . . . you, we . . . you hate me,"

Fitz curled her into his shoulder. She allowed him to arrange them both against the wall, facing each other. He brushed a strand of hair out of her face.

"Look," he spoke softly. "I know it's a lot to take in, and I don't wan' to overwhelm you, but I also know how you are, Jems. You wan' answers all at once, so I'm goin' to give them to you."

Jemma nodded softly, using a hand to wipe away her tears. It was so strange to see such an affectionate side of him, caring for her so gently. She kept her hands tucked tightly to her midsection.

"It's 2018. You and I work for SHIELD as heads of the Science Division. Sometimes that means we have to go out into, ah, field work. That's what we were doing yesterday." Fitz halted a moment, watching her reaction. Seeing as she was looking quite proud of her future-self's accomplishments, he continued. "HYDRA - the, um, bad guys - they had invented this . . . memory machine. It was our job to disable it. The machine - it read brain frequencies somehow and it .



. . it must have damaged you somehow." his hands stopped gesticulating.

Jemma looked up at him. "You mean I don't remember a decade of my lifetime? Because they took it from me?"

"Yeah, that just about sums it up," Fitz rubbed sheepishly at the back of his head, though he seemed relieved that she wasn't trying to fight him anymore.

She nodded. "And the machine?"

"It's a . . . bit unavailable at the moment." she leveled a glare at him. "Fine. It was a bit damaged in the escape, so . . ."

"Okay," Jemma nodded, sniffing a bit. "I think I get it. But, there's one more thing."

"Yeah?"

"What about us?" She looked absolutely crest fallen at not being able to remember. It took all of his will power not to grab her and kiss her tears away. "How did we resolve our conflicts? Get into SHIELD? Have Lizzie . . ." she shrugged. "Fall in love?"

Fitz just grinned, glad that he was getting her to calm down. Though her breaths were still shaky, her tears had begun to dry. He could see Lincoln approaching from behind Jemma's back, but he discreetly waved him off.

"That's . . . quite a long story. But I'll cut it down quickly." he squeezed her arm reassuringly. "In high school, we got paired up in Chem lab. They said we had to, 'cause we were the only ones able to keep up with each other. Eventually we got accepted into a summer program, made up somewhere in the middle over the Who," he grinned at the memory.

Jemma raised a curious eyebrow. "You like Doctor Who?"

The simple gesture was something he hadn't seen on her in years, and it made her look so much younger he couldn't help but feel nostalgic. "'Course. Your favorite is Tenth, through I prefer Eleventh."

She gave a small smile, which he silently applauded himself for.

"Anyway, we were best friends from then on. Went to Uni together. People started calling us Fitzsimmons. Eventually we both got into Sci Ops at SHIELD Academy - which was actually your idea. From there we were recruited onto a mobile unit." he winced, scratching behind his ear. The BUS years hadn't exactly been his favorite. Too many close calls. But all the same, they'd found a family.

"Turns out that while we in the unit, HYDRA had been growing inside SHIELD. The whole organization fell apart. Government started hunting down the agents. Coulson - the leader of our unit - founded it again. We're still not exactly legal . . . but, y'know, we help people."

Fitz froze. How did he explain this part of their story? It wasn't

exactly the cleanest area.

"Somewhere along there, I had an accident. Brain damage, couldn't talk straight. Somehow you thought it was your fault I wasn't getting better, so you left. Once you came back, we just avoided each other like the plague. I'd . . . I'd told you I loved you before the accident. That you weren't just my best friend, that you were something more." Fitz sighed. "We didn't want to talk about it. We were scared.

"But then . . . things happened. We were fighting a war. Bobbi - one of our friends - got shot. Nearly died. You helped save her, and when you saw how close we all were everyday to death - to never telling me you loved me back . . . you asked to talk." a small grin twisted his lips. Jemma thought it looked bittersweet. "Let's just say talking wasn't the only thing that happened that night,"

Jemma blushed furiously and looked down at her lap.

His face twisted as he tried to pad about what had happened a few days later. "I, um . . . there was this rock we were studying. It was like something out of a science fiction novel. While we were working on it, I asked you on our first date. You agreed and ran off to get ready for dinner. But I . . . I . . . stayed. Keep at it for a bit longer. Then the thing turned to liquid, sucked me up. Left you pregnant with Lizzie for six months while I was transported to another planet." Fitz took her hand. "But you got me back in time to be here for Lizzie's birth and all, so that was that. We got married in 2015, a few months after Lizzie was born."

Jemma looked up at him when he stopped, brown eyes meeting blue. She was speechless. After all that they had been through, they were still together. They were still fighting.

Jemma didn't believe in love. It was something people liked to romanticize in books, movies, TV . . . Whatever. To her, love was just a mixture of chemicals in the human body. But hearing all that they had been through, together, she decided that must truly be what everyone gushed about.

She let out a small, weak chuckle. "That's quite long for a short story . . . I'll need to make sure I have time for the full one,"

He winced. "Maybe I won't have to tell it. I mean, you're going to get your memories back soon, yeah?"

Jemma gave what was hopefully a strong smile. "Yeah,"

"But, I mean," Fitz traced his thumb over her knuckles. "until then, do you wanna meet everyone?"

Jemma swallowed around the lump in her throat, rubbing her stomach. "I suppose it would be for the best."

Fitz pulled himself to his feet, offering a hand to her.

"Fitz?" she asked quietly, looking up at his bright eyes.

He laced his fingers through hers as they began walking. "Yeah?"

"I, um . . ." she took a deep breath. "How far along am I? With the baby?"

Fitz was silent for a moment before replying. "I believe we calculated 'bout three months. So you're still not showing."

Jemma nodded, looking down at her bare feet. With a jolt of horror, she realized in just a few short months she wouldn't be able to see them. They would be obstructed by the being growing inside her.

She was pregnant in a woman's body. Sixteen and married. Her husband was her enemy. But he was so . . . different. He really cared for her.

And then there was her daughter out in another room, made from their love and struggles that she couldn't for the life of her remember.

Her breathing became more shaky. "Fitz?" she managed.

He stopped their walking, worriedly taking in her face. "Are you alright?"

"I . . . I don't know . . ." she breathed, barely above a whisper.

Jemma could barely breathe. She could feel her pulse racing against her chest. Panic was seeping into her bones. With a jolt, she realized she was having a panic attack.

She felt herself slipping into Fitz's arms before the lights went out.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>I'm having too much fun with cliffhangers.  
Â¬\\_(âf„<strong>\*\*)\_/Â¬ Sue me. \*\*

\*\*Anyway, I hope you liked this chapter! Looking back at Never Let Go, I feel like it was a complete failure. So I might contradict myself . . . Slightly, but if you catch something, let me know :)\*\*

\*\*Would love a review! I've been in a car for four hours straight with three younger siblings all packed like sardines, so feel free to amuse me with a review XD Thanks for reading!\*\*

#### 4. We're One, But We're Not The Same

\*\*Agh, this chap was so hard to write for some reason :P I don't even know why . . . It's mostly filler. \*\*

\*\*Hope you enjoy it nonetheless :)\*\*

\* \* \*

><p>"Any current conditions?"<p>

". . ."

"Fitz," the voice repeated, a hint of warmth and exhaustion present. "Could you please recite any current conditions?"

"Oh, right, um . . . memory loss. I think she's got a bit of a sinus problem right now. And . . ." \_Please forgive me.\_ "she's pregnant,"

There was a collective intake of air from the staff around. But then there was a squeal from Skye, and immediately the congratulations from everyone.

"Knocked her up again, eh Fitz?" Skye clapped him on the back.

Fitz groaned, resting his forehead in the hospital sheets of Jemma's bed. His hand was clasped with hers, despite the fact she was unconscious.

Bobbi just grinned at them and scribbled down another note on her clipboard. "Alright, thank you,"

Lincoln finished his own assessment, looking up with a small smile on his face. "So, I think we've gotten to the base of it,"

Everyone crowded in the med bay looked up at him expectantly.

"She's fine," he clarified at Fitz's worried look. "just had a panic attack. Caused her to black out from stress of her situation. Nothing major, but because of her state of mind you might not want to crowd her for the next few days. Give her a chance to adjust. Make sure this doesn't happen again." he tore off a sheet, which he handed to Fitz. "Especially because she's expecting, that's a lot of stress on her system."

"Got it," Fitz glanced down at the sheet in his hands. "What's this?"

"That," Lincoln flipped through a few leafs of paper on his clip board. "is Jemma's medical record from Sci Ops. It appears she suffered from anxiety back in her younger years, so I thought maybe you'd want a bit of research on that,"

"Anxiety?" Fitz looked up, puzzled. "She never said anything about that,"

"According to her file, it was mostly before she started uni. Nothing major, but I'm thinking this might have been a flare up."

He nodded, scanning the paper once more before folding and stashing it in his pocket. "I'll keep it in mind," he held out his hand. "Thank you, Lincoln,"

The Inhuman grinned. "It's my job,"

Just then, the padding of little feet filled the room as Lizzie ran in. She went straight for Fitz, who scooped her up.

"Daddy, Uncle Hunter showed me how to shoot his gun!" she beamed up at him.

Fitz's face fell. "What?"

"Yeah! It's easy. You just -"

As Lizzie went on in great detail on how to load, aim and fire a side arm, Fitz turned his gaze to the merc leaning in the doorway. Hunter just grinned his signature grin and raised his beer bottle in salute. Apparently it was never too early for a drink.

Bobbi held up her hand as Fitz opened his mouth to let her husband have it. "I'll take this one," she pursed her lips, handing a passing lab tech her clipboard. Hunter turned his eyes from Fitz to his approaching wife, and without a word, slipped quickly back out the door.

"Is Mum okay?" Lizzie had finished her training story and refocused on her still mother.

Fitz looked down at his daughter on his hip. Her eyes were wide and blue, frightened. His heart broke for her. She reminded him of when his mum had to tell him his father was gone. "Daddy has to tell you something, okay, monkey?"

Lizzie nodded seriously, curling her head into the crook of his shoulder. "'Kay,"

Daisy stepped aside to allow them room to pass out into the hallway. Without a word, she took up Fitz's place at Jemma's side.

\* \* \*

><p>"So she doesn't 'member me?" Lizzie asked sadly after Fitz finished his explanation.<p>

He gave a small sigh. "No, jus' when she was, ahm, little. She doesn't even remember me, baby,"

Lizzie's eyes welled up. Fitz jumped to pull her into his lap. "Shh, don't cry, Liz. It's gonna be okay,"

"I jus' want Mum," she sobbed into his shirt. Her slight British accent became more pronounced in her sorrow.

"I know," he stroked her back. "I do too, sweet. But first she has to wake up, okay?"

Lizzie nodded into him, still crying into his shirt.

\* \* \*

><p>The world faded into focus slowly. First came the beeping of medical equipment, followed by the cluttered din of voices. Next was the feeling of starched sheets before the bright glare of artificial lighting.<p>

Blinking groggily, Jemma sat up slowly. She was on a medical gurney, hooked to a single heart monitor.

The room was empty with nothing but a few drawers and cabinets. The walk to her right was just a panel of glass, the bottom half frosted

with an emblem of a bird of some sort.

On the other side, the brunette girl from earlier paced, poking fun at lab techs passing by.

Jemma was just starting to lift herself out of the bed when the girl turned around.

"Hey! You! Back in the bed!" She cried, a grin on her face as she burst back into the small room.

Jemma jumped, scrambling in her haste to get back in the sheets. The brunette just burst into laughter.

"Man, you are totally mini-Simmons, aren't ya?" She cackled. "M'names Skye," she stuck out a hand.

Jemma hesitated before shaking. "Hello,"

Skye just grinned. "This is so cool!"

Jemma gave a pained smile. "That's one way to put it," she sighed.

Skye deflated. "Sorry, it's just . . . You're kinda you, but you're kinda not?"

Jemma shrugged. "Yeah, that would pretty much cover it."

They lapsed into a bout of silence for a few minutes.

"I, um . . ." Skye tucked a short lock of hair behind her ear. "Do you remember the BUS days?"

Her brow crinkled. "BUS? I worked out of a bus?"

"No, it was actually a-" Skye sighed. "Never mind."

Jemma frowned. "Oh,"

Skye inwardly panicked. "So," she began, changing the topic. "Heard you're gonna pop soon,"

She froze before the memory came crashing back in. Fitz telling her she was pregnant. That she had his child inside her.

"Hopefully not soon?" Jemma offered a flimsy smile.

Skye copied her grin. "Yeah, maybe not soon,"

Jemma ran a hand through her hair. "This is all so strange." She breathed softly. "Yesterday I was putting the finishing touches on my project, and today here I am with a daughter and a husband."

Skye grinned. "And this isn't even the strangest thing that's happened to you two," she chuckled. "Probably not even top three,"

Jemma had a vaguely horrified look on her face. "\_Top three\_"

\* \* \*

><p>-<br>\*\*Because I'm positive FitzSimmons have a running list for top three ;)\*\*

## 5. First Steps

Skye left her alone with a change of clothes awhile after, showing her a button on the wall that she could push for privacy. Jemma had to just touch it before the glass windows became frosted like the bottom half.

"Well," she hummed softly. "This might not be so bad,"

She tugged out of her top and into a bra before stopping. At the other side of the room there was a wall length mirror.

Jemma hesitated before padding over. Carefully, she let her fingertips run over her stomach.

She was still mostly flat - that much was obvious. A sigh of relief escaped her. She couldn't be more than two or three months along, as Fitz had told her.

Her figure was still sleek, but her curves had begun to fill out more from her sixteen year old self. And, in many different places, her skin was scarred. A chill echoed down her spine about what that might entail about her occupation.

But then her digits danced to her face. She turned one way before twisting the other.

Her cheekbones had become more pronounced. Her eyes . . . even to her they seemed haunted in a way. Like they'd seen too much.

Her hair was short. Almost to the point of annoyance for her, as it brushed against her shoulder blades. But it still looked rather pretty, even she would admit.

Jemma quickly slipped into the rest of her clothes before pressing the button again. Once the frosted glass had reverted to transparent, she gathered up her discarded garments before exiting and following Skye to the kitchen.

\* \* \*

><p>"So what do ya like?" Skye asked, carelessly tossing a horde of breakfast food items on the counter.<p>

Jemma looked around, a bit overwhelmed. "Well . . . What do you recommend?"

Skye gave a mock double-take before pulling out her phone. "Could you repeat that? I need it to rub in future-you's face,"

Jemma raised an eyebrow.

"You don't usually take advice from me. Not that I can blame you, but . . ." She picked up a box of Special K. "Here, this your usual

thing,"

She gave the brunette a smile. "Thank you,"

"No prob," Skye returned the grin. A thoughtful look came over her. "Hey, you're a tea drinker, right?"

Jemma nodded.

Skye bent over to rummage through another drawer before tossing her a cylinder. Jemma cracked the top off and took a sniff. "It's Bobbi's oolong," Skye explained. ". I know you're usually more . . . English, but Fitz hides your food stash pretty well,"

Jemma nose crinkled. "What are we? Squirrels?"

Skye snickered. "Actually, not far off," she counted off on her fingers. "We live underground, hide our food from each other, fight constantly," she pointed at Jemma. "Popping out kids like no one's business,"

Jemma turned red. "Two's hardly-"

Skye waved her off, grabbing for a set of bowls and spoons. "Yeah, yeah. I know. It's just fun to mess with you while I'm kid free,"

Jemma quirked a smile. Skye seemed rather like able, if energetic.

They are their cereal in silence. Skye kept chancing glances at Jemma, but she decided to ignore it. Best to let her.

"You know," Skye broke. "You eat differently than her,"

"So there's two of us now?" Jemma replied, scooping the last bit of her meal into her mouth.

Skye rolled her eyes. "Sorry. Yeesh. I just mean you're more . . ."

Jemma nodded, gesturing for her to continue.

She shook her head. "Never mind,"

Jemma shrugged, changing the topic. "If you don't mind me asking, should I be taking vitamins of some sort? For the, ah . . ." She swallowed. "The baby,"

Skye nodded vigorously around a mouth of cereal. "Mm, yeah! Sorry, almost forgot,"

"Oh, no, it's fine," Jemma smiled, waving her off as she stood. "I can get them just fine on my own, if you'd just point me to where they are,"

"Top cabinet, bottom shelf in the corner." Skye nodded with her chin. "Or at least that's where you kept them with Lizzie,"

Jemma patted her on the shoulder as she passed. "Thank you,"



Skye."

She rummaged through the cabinet, pulling out various pregnancy supplements. Reading through the labels, she suddenly realized she had no where to begin.

"Would you happen to know which ones I use?" Jemma offered an apologetic wince.

Skye hopped up, leaning around her to shuffle the bottles around. "Yeah, they should be right . . ." Her hands closed around a seven day pill organizer, passing it off to the scientist. "Here. They're your own specialized mix, so you label them pretty carefully,"

"Oh," Jemma blinked, realizing future-her must still be organized to a T. "Thank you again,"

Skye grinned. "No prob. Just ask if you need anything else."

Jemma gratefully gave her a little squeeze on the shoulder before popping open the "Tuesday" pocket of the pill organizer. She made a mental note to refill the tray while she still had an outline of which supplements to take.

Just as she was swallowing her last swig of water, Fitz came in. His eyes caught on the brunette. "Oh, good, Skye-"

He froze, catching sight of Jemma. She offered a small wave, completely unsure of what to do.

\_Though really\_, she thought. \_How do you greet your husband you don't really remember?\_

Fitz let out a sigh of relief. He took a few steps toward her before remembering his place. He scratched at his ear unsurely.

"I, ahm . . . Hi, Jem," he started, offering a weak smile.

"Hello," she echoed, deer-in-the-headlights.

She only really excelled at one thing - preparation. Being confronted with her husband was not in her itinerary. Needless to say, this was not her forte.

Fitz shifted nervously, and it was only then she realized Lizzie was clinging to his back.

"Hi, Lizzie," Jemma offered a small smile. It felt plastic even to her.

Skye's eyes darted between the two. She was really tired of being caught in the crossfire of moments like these. "So . . . I'm just gonna go . . ."

She slipped out the door quickly.

Jemma felt neglected. \_Thanks\_.

They stood there for what felt like forever, eyes darting up to meet before flickering down to their shuffling feet. Even Lizzie stayed

tucked nearly behind Fitz's shoulder, only allowing her crystal blue eyes and a mop of mussed hair to peek out at the woman she called Mum.

And that's what broke Jemma's heart. Her daughter was staring out at her like a stranger, scared to attempt reconciliation. She had failed as a mother to protect her.

She padded tentatively toward the father-daughter pair.

"Lizzie," she started softly. "Would you mind my holding you?"

Fitz slowly turned, offering Lizzie up to her Mum. She held her arms out.

Gently, Jemma lifted her from his back and pulled her to her chest. The girl clung to her tightly, arms around her neck.

Jemma held her close, feeling her little breaths and tiny heartbeat. She was so innocent, so helpless, and she had terrified her.

She couldn't remember her, and yet she'd hurt her.

This little being, a perfect mix of her and Fitz with her father's true eyes and her mother's caramel locks. Whether she could remember her or not, she was inexplicably her - their - child.

"I'm sorry, baby girl," she whispered softly into her hair. "I'm so sorry,"

Lizzie whimpered lightly into her shoulder, and it was only then that Jemma realized she was crying. They both were.

She took the two of them gently to the ground, crossing her legs so she could hold her in her arms more freely. Lizzie snuggled into her, still lightly crying.

Jemma kept her eyes scrunched tightly shut, breathing in the scent of Lizzie's hair. She was just a little girl.

When she dared open her eyes, she found Fitz had sat down across from them. His eyes were wet with unshed tears.

This is all my fault. I tore them apart. \_

She cried harder.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>And back to the angst. Sorry D: But I promise the next few chapters are fluffy fluff :) <strong>

\*\*I'd love a review!\*\* \*\*And I'm taking suggestions for what else you'd like to see in these few precious chapters before the extreme angst and plot twist takes\*\* \*\*over, so . . .\*\*

\*\*Leave your thoughts below!\*\* \*\*XD \*\*

Jemma kept Lizzie tucked close under her chin, running her fingers over her back. Apologies were whispered into her curls, trying to soothe over the edges.

She suddenly felt hands on her arms. Her eyes flew open to find Fitz looking down at them.

He was so open she could read him like a book. His eyes were raw and blue, so full of worry and tears she could see in that instant why she fell in love with him in the first place. Fitz genuinely cared for her like no one else ever had.

"I'm so sorry, Fitz," she whispered, voice thick. "I . . . I mucked up everything,"

"No," he replied, taking her hand in his. Their fingers found their way together as if by muscle memory, curling into each other's palms. "None of this is your fault. Nothing, Jems."

His thumb stroked over her knuckles soothingly, but Jemma was feeling anything but. "But it is, Fitz. I scared her. She's terrified! No child should ever have to . . ."

Fitz kissed her lightly on the forehead. "They shouldn't. But when you decided to keep her all those years ago, you knew she might have t.' You knew that no matter what," he tucked a strand of hair behind her ear. His face was so close she could feel his breath on her cheeks. It was comforting. "You'd be a mum to her. And I know you can't remember, but it still stands. No matter what you do, she'll always think of you as her mother."

The pads of his thumbs brushed her tears from her face. "And no matter what, you'll always be my wife."

It was painfully stereotypical, but Jemma couldn't bring herself to care. She had likely wound up with the sweetest man on earth. She was still so confused about everything. But one thing was clear: the boy she'd come to hate was now a man who loved her.

Even if she didn't love him back.

\* \* \*

><p>Fitz pulled them back together and softly suggested some quiet time for all of them. Jemma simply nodded, still too overcome to disagree.<p>

Lizzie proudly picked out the movie - some Disney movie Jemma had never heard of - and popped it in. Fitz returned just as the trailers ended with a tray of drinks.

"Again?" He asked, looking at the screen then at Lizzie.

Lizzie just snuggled further into Jemma's side under the blanket. "Mum doesn't remember it. Everyone has to hear Let It Go at least once,"

Fitz sighed. This was the second time this week.

He handed a mug to Jemma, who thanked him before taking a tentative sip. Her eyebrows raised at the contents.

"How'd you know?"

He smiled sadly. "I've known you for thirteen years, Jem. I sure as hell know how you take your tea." He pulled out a travel mug, which he placed in Lizzie's eager hands. "And for the monkey,"

"Thank you," she chirped, taking a long sip of what smelled like cocoa.

Fitz grinned at her, ruffling her curls. "You're welcome, Liz,"

They settled in, Jemma playing the part of mother as her own had done before her. She curled an arm around Lizzie, keeping her nestled in her side.

This was what Jemma had envisioned the few times she'd ever dared to picture adulthood. Curled together, able to whisk away worries with quality time. It almost felt right.

But then she'd come tumbling back into the nightmare, and she would remember that this wasn't truly hers. Not current-her, anyway. No, it was the future Jemma Fitz's. Simmons didn't belong here.

It gave her an overall dejected feeling. This was hers, in a way, but all at the same time it wasn't. She was caught in the middle of a whirlwind, forced to choose who she was. And frankly, she didn't have a clue.

\* \* \*

><p>Fitz kept casting nervous glances in Jemma's direction. She seemed content, a bit joyful that Lizzie had allowed her to cuddle with her. But at the same time, she seemed deep in thought.<p>

Several times over the course of the movie, he had to refrain from massaging her scalp or playing with her hair. Because no matter how similar she seemed, how at home she appeared, this wasn't the Jemma he knew. She was younger, less world weary.

A few minutes from the closing scene, his watch pinged. Jemma's head whipped around at the sound. Sheepishly, he held up his watch hand. Though a look of puzzlement came over her face, she just took it as it was and curled up again with Lizzie.

Fitz sighed, pulling up his shirt sleeve. A message jumped out at him.

\_Debriefing in five ~ C\_

A frown quirked his face. Though he had expected it sooner or later, he'd been leading toward later. Jemma needed him, as did Lizzie, and he didn't want to think about how long Coulson would be keeping him.

So despite his put offs, Fitz towed himself to his feet. "I have to go," he explained at their questioning looks. "Coulson's

orders,"

Jemma just nodded, puzzled. Lizzie, on the other hand, stood up on the couch so she was almost level with him. "Tell Uncle Coulson hi for me," she told him, wrapping her arms around his chest and giving him a sloppy kiss on the cheek.

Fitz chuckled, giving her a squeeze back. "I will. And Jemma," he turned to the biochemist. "I don't want to run out on you, but-"

"Oh, no, no," she waved him off. "It's no problem, really. Lizzie and I can go and . . . have lunch?" she directed the last portion to the little girl. Lizzie nodded enthusiastically. "Have lunch," she grinned with a nod of her head at Fitz.

"Oh," Fitz returned her nod slowly. "Alright, then. I'll be back in a bit,"

Astonished by her turn of character, he left their room and headed for Coulson's office.

Maybe this wouldn't be so bad.

\* \* \*

><p>"So what do you like to eat?" Jemma asked softly.<p>

The mother-daughter pair followed the hallway to where Jemma remembered the kitchen area being. Lizzie held her hand tightly, as if scared to let go, and swung their arms between them.

"Sandwiches," she shrugged. "you make the best ones,"

"Really?" Jemma crinkled her eyebrows. Her own mother had always been adamant that she learn to make at least one easy meal - or, in her case, sandwiches. But she hadn't expected her culinary skills to have made it this far in life.

"Yeah. Especially the ones with pro . . . prosunno," her face screwed up - adorably, in Jemma's biased opinion - as she tried to pronounce the word.

"Prosciutto?" Jemma offered gently.

Lizzie nodded vigorously. "Yeah, that. Daddy likes it with mosella cheese and pesto,"

"You mean mozzarella?" Jemma asked again, smiling at the girl's vocabulary.

"Mmhm. It's his favorite," she grinned proudly. "Mine too,"

"Well then," Jemma grinned down at her with a spark in her eye. "Let's go make some sandwiches,"

If her real mother couldn't be here to take care of and spend time with her, Jemma decided the opportunity fell to her. Because this girl sure as hell wasn't going to hurt because of her mistakes.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Cue<strong> \*\*fluff\*\* \*\*:~)\*\*

\*\*I would love a review if you have a moment!\*\*

## 7. Love Is The Movement

Jemma leaned against the counter, a small smile on her face as she watched Lizzie.

The girl was running around the kitchen area, gathering everything the two of them would need to make sandwiches. Her little arms were full of packages of cheese and meat, but she refused to let Jemma help.

"Im'ma big girl," she insisted as Jemma offered her assistance yet again.

"Alright," she grinned, beginning to check drawers for knives and cutting boards.

At last, they had their ingredients and supplies assembled. Lizzie scooted a bar stool up to the counter so she could hop up.

Jemma shuffled through the bread selections, her young charge looking on with interest. "Do you know what bread everybody likes?"

Lizzie pointed out a French loaf. "That one! It's only good with prosunno," she stated, matter-of-factly.

Jemma ruffled her curls with a grin. "Thank you very much, Liz,"

Together, they sliced the bread and filled it with toppings. Lizzie made a point that sandwiches were best wrapped in paper, so Jemma found some parchment and the two twined a bow around each.

Finally, their meal was finished. Lizzie had a smear of aioli across her cheek, which she didn't seem to notice as she clambered down her stool.

"Thank you!" She grinned up at her. "I'm gonna go give Daddy his,"

"Ah ah!" Jemma caught her before she could bolt. Awkwardly, she settled the child on her hip. "I think he's busy with . . ." She struggled for the name of the man Fitz had had to meet.

"Uncle Coulson?" Lizzie asked, still clutching a sandwich to her side.

"Yes," a smile broke out on her face. "Coulson,"

The name felt familiar on her tongue, but she couldn't for the life of her remember anything more. Her smile dimmed a few watts.

"Well, would you like to wait for Fitz to get back or eat

now?"

"Let's wait," Lizzie decided. "Daddy always eats with us on sandwich day,"

"Today's sandwich day?" Jemma furrowed her eyebrows.

"Yeah, you said it was 'cause you and Daddy don't work," she slumped dejectedly.

Jemma clamped her mouth shut to prevent further questioning. The little fall of Lizzie's face when she hadn't remembered their day was enough to keep her quiet. Instead, she let out a soft "Oh,"

Any moment of bonding had vanished, and Lizzie loosened her hold on Jemma's neck to be let down. She went to pick up a small doll on the corner of the table and then slumped to the floor, playing with the arms.

Jemma sighed softly, resigning herself to the fact that no matter what she did at this point, Lizzie would likely always feel her real mother's absence.

\* \* \*

><p>"Hey, girls," Fitz plastered on what he hoped was a reassuring smile as he entered the kitchen.<p>

Lizzie jumped up from her small collection of toys and ran to hug his leg. "You're back! We made sandwiches."

She proudly nabbed one off the counter and presented it to her father. Fitz smiled softly at the offering. "Thanks, monkey," he leaned over to give her a kiss on the forehead.

Jemma awkwardly hovered, wringing her hands together. Lizzie looked between her two parents before moving a bit closer to Fitz.

He scooped her up, looking over to Jemma. "She wasn't too much, right?"

Jemma shook her head, waving him off. "Oh, no. Not at all. She's a big helper,"

Lizzie burrowed her head into Fitz's shoulder, but Jemma caught a flash of a proud grin.

"You raised her well," she said suddenly before reddening. Her eyes returned to her warring hands.

Fitz gave a small twist of his lips. "You did, too, y'know,"

Jemma shook her head again. "No, that wasn't me. That was her mum," she offered a sad smile.

"Same thing to me," Fitz offered quietly.

"No, it's not," Jemma took a shaky breath, keeping her gaze on her palms. "I took her from you. She . . ." She tapped her forehead. "She's trapped in here,"

Fitz took a step toward her, but Jemma took another back. He stopped, scratching behind his ear.

Jemma could feel her eyes moistening, but she pushed the feeling down. It wouldn't do; she'd had enough of the water works for today. So she changed the subject.

"Well, our sandwiches are ready," she offered, gesturing to the stacked up rolls.

He nodded, allowing Lizzie to drop from his grasp. And then together, they gathered up their meal and a small cooler.

Jemma had no idea where they were going, but she took her bundle and followed. They walked up a stairwell she remembered running down a few hours before, making her blush in remembrance.

A few more hallways, and they were outdoors.

It was late afternoon - not exactly lunchtime, but they'd take it. The sun was bright and warm on their backs, the air fresh. They were in a small field surrounded on every side by trees. Grasses grew tall and waved lightly in the breeze.

Jemma turned around. The door they'd just exited seemed to appear out of nowhere, just a pane sticking up out of thin air.

"Fitz, what's -"

"Cloaking tech," he grinned, squeezing her shoulder. "One of mine, actually. But I can't take all the credit. You helped too,"

"It's magnificent," she breathed with an emerging smile. "How does it bend the light to -"

"Blend with its surroundings?"

"Yes, I mean . . . It's not mirroring the grass, it looks real."

"We used a simulation to synthesize what the land looked like before the base was built," he spread an arm out to point an imaginary line across the expanse of grass. "From about there to right there, it's all the simulation. Really, it's just -"

"- an artificial projection based off real time simulations," a wide, breathless euphoria split her face. "Fitz, that's genius!"

It wasn't until she looked up at him that she realized it. Her cheeks colored with a blush. "I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to -"

"Finish my sentence?" He chuckled softly. "It's actually normal for us, believe it or not,"

Jemma just looked down, not trusting herself to meet his eyes. Her trainer toed at the dirt. "Not many people appreciate it, if you get my meaning. Seems like I'm showing them up or something of the sort,"

"I know," he mumbled, hesitantly taking her hand. Jemma felt herself



freeze up for a moment before allowing him to lead her. It was hard for him too, she reminded herself. Might as well let him have some sense of normalcy.

Lizzie had already messily spread out a blanket across a less weedy patch of land, flopping down on it. She beamed up at them as they each sat on a corner.

"Are we going to eat now?" She asked.

Fitz pulled her to him so she could sit on his lap. "I think so, Liz,"

Jemma hesitantly unwrapped hers, inwardly smiling at how happy Lizzie and Fitz seemed about theirs. But then the smell of aioli wafted toward her, and she took a small bite.

The corner of her lips twitched up. She hadn't ever made a sandwich like this, but she had to say it was one of the best she'd ever tasted.

All too soon, they were finished. Lizzie ran off to pick wildflowers while she and Fitz stayed on the blanket. He didn't advance or prod her, which she was eternally grateful for. Jemma didn't think she could handle any more confrontation.

So together but apart, the rift between them perhaps shrinking just a bit, they watched their daughter play.

\* \* \*

><p><strong>Apologies for my shaky science. I scored well in Biology, but I'm drawing a blank on technical engineering. <strong>

\*\*There's my fluff XD Enjoy it, because the next few chapters are going to be showing some expanding plot points. Prepare for the angst that I'm so fond of :)\*\*

\*\*Anyhow, I'd love a review :) Til' next time!\*\*

End  
file.